

Health Care

Health care for families

I believe every family deserves a family doctor.

If we lock up a criminal and they get sick, we don't deny them health care. So why is it OK for hard-working people with full-time jobs to go without health coverage for their families?

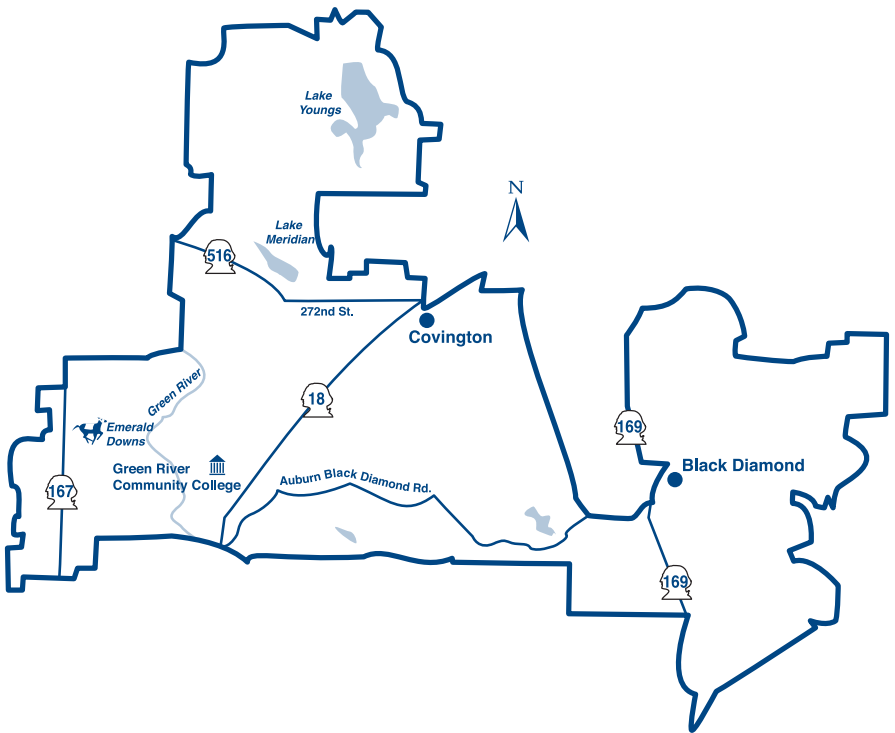
To me, this is a moral issue. As a firefighter responding to emergencies, I treat everyone who's hurt the same as everybody else. They're human beings who need help.

We took a bold step toward fixing this tragedy with Cover All Kids, our state's plan to make sure every child – rich or poor – has health care by 2010. I'm proud to say we're making progress.

The next step is making sure every worker has health care. If you have a full-time job – or two part-time jobs – there's no reason why you shouldn't have health coverage. Too many people are working too hard with the constant worry that if somebody in their family gets injured or seriously ill, it will bankrupt them.

We can do better. I'll keep working with other lawmakers on reforms to make health care more affordable for everybody

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State Representative **Geoff Simpson**
47th Legislative District

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State Representative
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47th Legislative District

Dear neighbors,

What can we do to make Washington state a better place to live, work and raise a family?

I am always listening to citizens and looking for common-sense solutions to the challenges we all face. Washington state's economy is strong, and our schools and universities are top-notch.

To win the global race for the best jobs, we have to keep pushing for the best schools and colleges in the world, the best health care, the strongest infrastructure of highways, mass transit and ports.

This newsletter isn't big enough to talk about every issue that will come up during the 2008 session. If you have a specific question or idea, please call the toll-free Hotline or send me an e-mail. I make a point of reading everything I get from citizens and try to respond as quickly as I can.

Inside this newsletter:

Disaster in December – The historic storm this December pointed out weaknesses we must address. I-5 was shut down for a week down in Lewis County, with the only detour taking you to Yakima and I-90. To prevent a repeat of this traffic nightmare, we need common-sense solutions.

We also can plan better, and prepare better, for the next disaster.

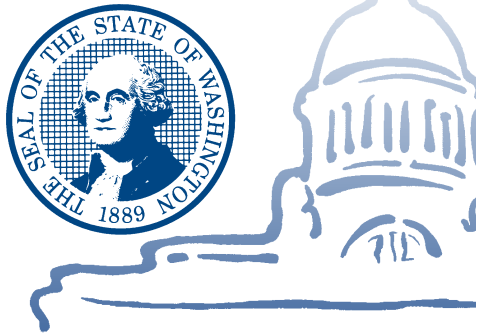
Real property tax relief – Property taxes are a huge issue for homeowners. I know many of you feel squeezed by the insane prices in King County today and higher property taxes that go with those home values.

Health coverage for families – Too many workers – especially people who work for small businesses – have no health coverage for their family, and workers with health care keep getting hit with higher co-pays and monthly premiums.

Thank you for taking the time to read this, and thank you for the privilege of serving as your representative. It's an honor.

Sincerely,

Rep. Geoff Simpson
47th Legislative District



The Disaster in December

King County escaped the worst of the December storm – but we still were hurt by one of strongest storms in the last 50 years. I can't remember the last time I-5 was shut down for a day, much less a week.



We can't predict windstorms, earthquakes and other emergencies. They'll happen. What we can do is get better prepared for the next one, and the first line of defense is giving every family the tools to protect themselves.

Your family – You should have a three-day survival kit and a family plan. If the power goes out for a week, what will you drink and eat? Where will the family go if your neighborhood needs to be evacuated?

- At a minimum, your family's kit should have:
- Three days worth of food
- Three gallons of water per family member (one gallon a day)
- Battery operated radio, flashlights and batteries
- Blankets, extra clothes and sturdy shoes
- Ibuprofen, thermometer and alcohol-based hand wash
- Medications, extra eyeglasses or food for your pet

Family emergency plans should also include a rendezvous point if telephones and cell phones fail during emergencies.

For more information – <http://www.govlink.org/3days3ways/>



In the House chamber with my daughter, Hannah, on Children's Day

Common-sense solutions to traffic

Some politicians say we should send a new version of Proposition 1 to the voters, who just rejected the latest idea.

The idea that we in central Puget Sound should foot the entire bill for our state highways while the rest of the state has us contribute for theirs is absurd and unfair. Washington State's entire economy is dependent on good roads here and all of Washington should pay for them. And if regional financing of state highways is implemented here, what are the odds folks in Puget Sound will ever be willing to pay for roads in the rest of the state again? I applaud the Governor for “taking back” SR 520. The State should pay for state projects.

So what else should we do?

We should make it simple and fair.

First: Scrap regional financing of state highways, a bad idea when it was conceived and a proven failure today. And forget about reforming transportation governance, it's unnecessary and will only result in more government, more delay, more politics and more red tape.

Second: Let the state fund state highways through statewide taxes. Why should we pay extra while we subsidize the rest of the state?

Third: Local control -- Let each region control and fund their regional transit.



We already have a regional mass transit agency in Sound Transit that is delivering projects on time and on budget, bringing in hundreds of millions in federal funds and passing audits with flying colors. Sound Transit should be encouraged to try again this year, since polling shows that their plans to extend the light rail system would pass if it were on the ballot alone in 2008 and their progress needs to continue.

For doubters who say trains and transit can't work here, go to downtown Portland, park your car and ride the streetcars and trains. It works like a dream. We have a nightmare today in Seattle and King County – so why not do something bold to give our citizens a better way to get to work every morning?

Real relief on property taxes

I believe owning a home is the key part of the American Dream, and I know many people are worried that rising home prices – and property taxes – will make that dream unaffordable.

Most politicians make this debate a choice between cutting taxes and cutting the services supported by those taxes – your local police officers, firefighters and schools.



I don't think real property tax relief has to go this direction. It doesn't have to be win-lose, with every gain for homeowners coming at the expense of public safety and local services.

Instead of focusing on property tax rate increases – which don't really help reduce your taxes – why not look at the big picture and do strong reform that will cut taxes for the middle class?

During the 2008 session, I'll support legislation to offer real property tax relief.

One idea that has merit is a homestead exemption.

If we exempt the first \$100,000 in value of every home from property taxes, we give working people and the middle class a real break – and we don't cut into police, fire and schools.

Keeping In Touch



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